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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 5, 7, 9, 24 and 25 as follows:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A string tensioning system for a string instrument having an instrument body, at least one tensionable string that is fixed on at least one end at a fixing point, and a chamber accommodating a portion of the at least one tensionable string positioned between a string introduction aperture and the fixing point, the system comprising:

at least one string tensioning device adjustable from outside the instrument body, wherein the at least one string tensioning device is at least partially arranged in the chamber of the instrument body;

the at least one string tensioning device comprising a tensioning screw and a string tensioning head;

the tensioning screw extending into the chamber;

the string tensioning head being connectable to the portion and being movable by rotating the tensioning screw; and

the chamber comprising free spaces on opposite sides of the string tension head that allow for free movement of the portion between the string tensioning head and the feed aperture and the portion between the string tensioning head and the fixing point,

wherein the free spaces extend along a direction of movement of the string tensioning head and allow for the free movement of said portions of the string during movement of the string tensioning head within the chamber.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the tensioning screw extends into the chamber crosswise to an axis running through the string introduction aperture and the fixing point.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a guiding body, wherein the string tensioning head is guided in the guiding body.

4. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein the guiding body is a block-shaped guiding body.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 3,~~ A string tensioning system for a string instrument having an instrument body, at least one tensionable string that is fixed on at least one end at a fixing point, and a chamber accommodating a portion of the at least one tensionable string positioned between a string introduction aperture and the fixing point, the system comprising:

at least one string tensioning device adjustable from outside the instrument body, wherein the at least one string tensioning device is at least partially arranged in the chamber of the instrument body;

the at least one string tensioning device comprising a tensioning screw and a string tensioning head;

the tensioning screw extending into the chamber;

the string tensioning head being connectable to the portion and being movable by rotating the tensioning screw;

the chamber comprising free spaces on opposite sides of the string tension head that allow for free movement of the portion between the string tensioning head and the feed aperture and between the string tensioning head and the fixing point; and

a guiding body,

wherein the string tensioning head is guided in the guiding body, and

wherein the guiding body comprises oppositely arranged slot-shaped recesses, wherein the slot-shaped recesses accommodate movement of the portion and allow for free lateral movement of the at least one tensionable string between the string tensioning head and the feed aperture and between the string tensioning head and the fixing point.

6. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one guiding sleeve, wherein the string tensioning head is guided within the at least one guiding sleeve.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 6,~~ A string tensioning system for a string instrument having an instrument body, at least one tensionable string that is fixed on at least one end at a fixing point, and a chamber accommodating a portion of the at least one tensionable string positioned between a string introduction aperture and the fixing point, the system comprising:

at least one string tensioning device adjustable from outside the instrument body, wherein the at least one string tensioning device is at least partially arranged in the chamber of the instrument body;

the at least one string tensioning device comprising a tensioning screw and a string tensioning head;

the tensioning screw extending into the chamber;

the string tensioning head being connectable to the portion and being movable by rotating the tensioning screw;

the chamber comprising free spaces on opposite sides of the string tension head that allow for free movement of the portion between the string tensioning head and the feed aperture and between the string tensioning head and the fixing point; and

at least one guiding sleeve,

wherein the string tensioning head is guided within the at least one guiding sleeve,

wherein the at least one guiding sleeve comprises oppositely arranged slots which accommodate the portion.

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8. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the at least one guiding sleeve comprises ends which are one of fixed to the instrument body and non-movably mounted to the instrument body.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 1, further comprising~~ A string tensioning system for a string instrument having an instrument body, at least one tensionable string that is fixed on at least one end at a fixing point, and a chamber accommodating a portion of the at least one tensionable string positioned between a string introduction aperture and the fixing point, the system comprising:

at least one string tensioning device adjustable from outside the instrument body, wherein the at least one string tensioning device is at least partially arranged in the chamber of the instrument body;

the at least one string tensioning device comprising a tensioning screw and a string tensioning head;

the tensioning screw extending into the chamber;

the string tensioning head being connectable to the portion and being movable by rotating the tensioning screw;

the chamber comprising free spaces on opposite sides of the string tension head that allow for free movement of the portion between the string tensioning head and the feed aperture and between the string tensioning head and the fixing point; and

at least one slot formed on an end of the instrument body, wherein the at least one slot communicates with the chamber.

10. (Original) The system of claim 9, further comprising pieces of material arranged in corner areas of the chamber.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the pieces of material are inset and fixed, whereby free spaces are provided between adjacent pieces of material.

12. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one tuning screw coupled to the tensioning screw.

13. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one tuning screw threadably engaging the tensioning screw, wherein rotation of the tuning screw causes the tensioning screw and the string tensioning head to move towards or away from the tuning screw.

14. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one tuning screw connected to the tensioning screw, wherein rotation of the tuning screw causes the string tensioning head to move towards or away from the tuning screw.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the tensioning screw is axially retained and rotatable.

16. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a mechanism for preventing rotation of the string tensioning head.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the mechanism is connected to the string tensioning head.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein the mechanism comprises one of a projection and a pin.

19. (Original) The system of claim 16, further comprising at least one guiding slot which receives the mechanism and which guides the string tensioning head in the longitudinal direction.

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20. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the string tensioning head comprises an internal screw thread and an extended side portion that is connected to the portion.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the extended side portion comprises an opening that receives the portion.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the string tensioning head comprises a surface which engages another surface to prevent rotation of the string tensioning head during longitudinal movement of the string tensioning head.

23. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the instrument body is a guitar body.

24. (Currently Amended) A string tensioning system for a string instrument having an instrument body, a plurality of strings, and a chamber accommodating end areas of the strings arranged between string introduction apertures and string exit apertures, the system comprising:

a plurality of string tensioning devices adapted to be mounted to the stringed instrument;

each string tensioning device comprising a rotatable tuning mechanism, a tensioning screw, and a string tensioning head;

each tensioning screw being adapted to extend into the chamber;

each string tensioning head comprising an opening adapted to receive one of the end areas; and

each string tensioning head being movable by rotating one of the tensioning screw and the tuning mechanism; and

guiding recesses arranged on opposite sides of each string tensioning head, the guiding recesses extending along a direction of movement of the string tensioning heads,

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wherein rotation of each rotatable tuning mechanism causes each string tensioning head to move without rotating, and

wherein the guiding recesses guide movement of the end areas of the strings during rotation of each rotatable tuning mechanism.

25. (Currently Amended) The combination of a string tensioning system and a string instrument having an instrument body, a plurality of strings, and a chamber accommodating end areas of the strings between string introduction apertures and string exit apertures, the combination comprising:

a plurality of string tensioning devices arranged on the stringed instrument;

each string tensioning device comprising a movable tuning mechanism, a tensioning screw, and a string tensioning head;

each tensioning screw extending into the chamber; ~~and~~

each string tensioning head being movably disposed in the chamber and being connected to one of the end areas,

each string tensioning head being movable by rotating one of the tensioning screw and the tuning mechanism; and

guiding slots located on opposite sides of each string tensioning head, the guiding slots extending along a direction of movement of the string tensioning heads,

wherein rotation of each rotatable tuning mechanism causes each string tensioning head to move ~~in a direction~~ without rotating, and

wherein the guiding slots guide movement of the end areas of the strings during rotation of each rotatable tuning mechanism.

26. (Original) A method of stringing a string instrument which includes the string tensioning system of claim 1, the method comprising:

mounting the at least one tensionable string on the instrument body; and

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subjecting the at least one tensionable string to tension by moving the string tensioning head.

27. (Original) A method of stringing a string instrument which includes the string tensioning system of claim 24, the method comprising:

mounting each of the plurality of strings on the instrument body; and

subjecting each of the plurality of strings to tension by moving the string tensioning heads.

28. (Original) A method of stringing a string instrument which includes the string tensioning system of claim 25, the method comprising:

mounting each of the plurality of strings on the instrument body; and

rotating each movable tuning mechanism to subject each of the plurality of strings to tension.

29. (Original) A method of stringing a string instrument which includes the string tensioning system of claim 25, the method comprising:

mounting each of the plurality of strings on the instrument body; and

subjecting each of the plurality of strings to tension by moving the string tensioning heads.